



COMMITTEE STATEMENT

**Opening Statement of Rep. Rick Allen (R-GA), Republican Leader
Subcommittee on Health, Education, Labor & Pensions: "Exploring Pathways to Affordable, Universal
Health Coverage"
February 17, 2022
(As prepared for delivery)**

"Employer-sponsored health insurance, or ESI, is the bedrock of America's health care system. Despite this, the Biden Administration has waged an assault on the coverage that a majority of Americans and their families rely on.

"As employers struggle to attract talent during the ongoing labor shortage due to the Biden Administration's policies, they are increasingly bolstering health benefits to attract and retain talented workers. And we know that this recruiting tool works. In fact, 75 percent of Americans say that coverage played a role in their decision to accept their current job. Further, a new poll released this week found that those with employer-sponsored coverage rate their care 19 percent more positively than those with coverage under Obamacare.

"In an attempt to push more Americans onto Affordable Care Act (ACA) exchanges, Democrats are increasing Obamacare subsidies. If these subsidies get too high and create an unlevel playing field in the healthcare market, employer-sponsored health insurance plans won't be able to compete with Obamacare plans, which will ultimately lead to a public option. And as everyone knows, a public option is simply a trojan horse for Medicare-for-All.

"Democrats' radical Medicare-for-All and public option proposals would destroy most employer-sponsored insurance plans. Stripping Americans of their employer-sponsored insurance and dumping them into government-run health care would be a major mistake. It would worsen the current labor shortage and create a disincentive for work.

"The vast majority of the 155 million Americans who have employer-sponsored insurance are very happy with their plans. On average, employer-based plans provide richer and more comprehensive coverage relative to ACA plans. Further, when given the option, 83 percent of employees in the U.S. choose to be on an employer-sponsored insurance plan.

"The Biden Administration's attempt to undermine these plans is a threat to personal choice and affordable health care, and it will cost taxpayers exponentially more. We should be encouraging less dependence on government assistance, not more.

"We must resist Democrats' attempt to expand broken, unaffordable programs. The so-called Build Back Better Act would drastically expand ACA and Medicaid eligibility. Obamacare has been breaking promises for over a decade, and throwing more money after bad will not fix this program.

“Additionally, these proposed expansions to the ACA would overwhelmingly help wealthy households and exacerbate health care inflation. These expansions also won’t increase the number of people insured, but they will primarily go to those who already have health insurance.

“President Biden’s socialist tax-and-spending bill would also allow the Secretary of Health and Human Services to negotiate—if not dictate—the prices of prescription medications. These price controls would reduce the incentive for companies to participate in medical innovation and severely cut back on new life-saving drugs and their development. Companies who don’t abide by the negotiated price will face such steep penalties that they would likely be driven out of the market. This will give Americans less freedom and less choice in health care.

“More government intervention won’t decrease the cost of health care. The best way to make health care affordable would be to increase the use of Association Health Plans (AHPs). These plans have the power to save Americans up to 50 percent on health care costs by allowing small businesses to band together to offer lower-cost health insurance.

“Democrats want to monopolize health care with inefficient government-run plans, Association Health Plans focus on expanding real health care options to Americans who do not currently have affordable coverage.

“Simply put, more federal control is the biggest threat to our health care system. Socializing health care would increase inflation, exacerbate the federal debt, grossly diminish the quality of health care, and put Washington bureaucrats in charge of making the health care decisions for millions of Americans. Expanding Washington control will not improve our country’s health care system—it will make it exponentially worse.”